

## Thursday Evening Bible Study

**Series: the End Times – Bible prophecy about future events and periods**

### Teaching Summary for Week 33

#### The Kingdom and the Covenants

#### **Part 6. The future Messianic Kingdom in Old Testament prophecy**

#### Five major subjects in the future prophesied Kingdom

5. The **Temple**: Worship in the Millennial Kingdom
- f. The **Glory of the Lord; Jehovah entering the Temple**

The Glory of the Lord will return to the Millennial Temple, coming in by way of the same Eastern gate from which the Glory departed at the start of the Babylonian captivity (Ezekiel 9-11).

- g. The **Mountain of the House of the Lord**

The Millennial Temple will be located at the top of the highest mountain in the world at that time: the Mountain of the House of the Lord.

And the city of Jerusalem will also be found at the top of this mountain.

Again, you can read all about this in Ezekiel 45:1-8 and Ezekiel 48:8-20.

## **h. The Millennial Temple with its order of worship**

The future Millennial Temple, including the organization of the worship rituals within, is described in great detail in Ezekiel 40-48.

This Millennial Temple will far exceed, in size and in glory, anything that came before it.

*Hag 2:6-9*

*6 "For thus says the Lord of hosts, ' Once more in a little while, I am going to shake the heavens and the earth, the sea also and the dry land. 7 'I will shake all the nations; and they will come with the wealth of all nations, and I will fill this house with glory,' says the Lord of hosts. 8 'The silver is Mine and the gold is Mine,' declares the Lord of hosts. 9 'The latter glory of this house will be greater than the former,' says the Lord of hosts, 'and in this place I will give peace,' declares the Lord of hosts."*

By the way, as is the case with so many prophetic statements in the Old Testament, this too has both a near and a far fulfillment.

The prophet Haggai was giving encouragement to the remnant in his day to complete the second temple.

But his prophecy also looks out far into the future to the time – still future for us – when the Millennial Temple will be built.

Nothing in the entire history of Israel corresponds to the architectural features of the Temple that Ezekiel describes.

In Ezekiel 37:26-28, Ezekiel prophesied that the Millennial Temple would be in Israel forever:

Ezek 37:26-28

26 "I will make a covenant of peace with them; it will be an everlasting covenant with them. And I will place them and multiply them, and **will set My sanctuary in their midst forever**. 27 "My dwelling place also will be with them; and I will be their God, and they will be My people. 28 "And the nations will know that I am the Lord who sanctifies Israel, when My sanctuary is in their midst forever.""

Then, in **Ezekiel 40:5-43:27**, Ezekiel describes in great detail the vision he received concerning the Millennial Temple.

**<see the handout with 2 illustrations >**

Here is a high-level sketch of what he saw:

1. He describes **the outer court** with its gates and chambers (Eze 40:5-27).
2. He describes **the inner court**, including four things:
  - a. The **gates** of the inner court (Eze 40:28-37)
  - b. The **table** for preparing the sacrifices (Eze 40:38-43)
  - c. The **chambers** for the ministering priests (Eze 40:44-46)
  - d. The **Altar** (Eze 40:47).
3. He describes **the Temple itself**, in Eze 40:48-41:26. This includes:
  - a. The **porch** (vv. 48-49)
  - b. The **posts** (v.1)
  - c. The **Holy place** (v. 2)
  - d. The **Most Holy Place** (vv. 3-4)
  - e. The **Temple wall and chambers** (vv. 5-11)
  - f. The **separate place** , including areas where the sacrifices will be prepared, the details of which are provided in Eze 46:19-24. (vv. 12-14)
  - g. The **interior** of the Temple (vv. 15-20)
  - h. The **exterior** of the Temple (vv. 21-26)
  - i. From the dimensions given in this section, it is clear that this Millennial Temple will be **far larger** than any previous Temple. **See diagram.**

4. He gives a more detailed description of **the chambers of the inner court** (Eze 42:1-14)
5. He then describes **the outer wall** (Eze 42:15-20).
6. After that, Ezekiel reports **the return of the Shechinah Glory**, as we studied earlier (Eze 43:1-6)
7. This is followed by a detailed description of **the Throne** (Eze 43:7-12)
8. Then he gives a more detailed description of **the Altar** (Eze 43:13-18).
9. Finally, he mentions **the offerings** which will be made in the Millennial Temple (Eze 43:19-27).

We also need to note the things in Solomon's Temple that are not included in Ezekiel's vision of the Millennial Temple:

**<see handout on Solomon's temple>**

- No ark of the covenant (mercy seat) (Jer 3:16)
- No cherubim above the mercy seat
- No tablets of stone containing the Mosaic Law
- No pot of manna
- No rod of Aaron
- No golden candlestick
- No veil
- No showbread tables

Now these things had the highest place and significance in the tabernacle and Temples where the Levitical offerings were made. But they are not found in the Millennial Temple.

The only article of furniture in the Millennial Temple is the table or altar of wood. This speaks of communion with God.

All of this tells us that the sacrifices and offerings in the Millennial Temple will have a different purpose from those that were made under the Mosaic Law.

We will examine the Millennial system of priesthood and offerings next. We will see that while there are similarities to the Levitical offerings under the Mosaic Law, there are also many differences.

i. The Millennial System of **the Priesthood and the Offerings (Eze 44:1-46:24)**

The animal sacrifices or offerings in Ezekiel 44-46 are perhaps the most controversial subject in Ezekiel's vision of the Millennial Temple.

We will begin with an overview of this section, and then dive into the controversy!

These three chapters deal with the various laws and statutes regarding the millennial priesthood and sacrifice.

While there are similarities with the Law of Moses, there are also some fundamental differences.

Thus, the Millennial system of priesthood and sacrifice is NOT a reinstatement of the Mosaic system.

The Law of Moses ended permanently with the death of the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. The New Covenant replaces the Mosaic covenant.

Thus, the tablets of stone that were the embodiment of the Law of Moses will not be found in the Millennial temple.

Since God Himself in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ will be dwelling in the Temple, there is no need for any Ark of the Covenant. That's why it is not found in the Millennial Temple.

The Messianic Kingdom will have its own system of laws and statutes, and that includes the system of worship.

So in Ezekiel 44-46, Ezekiel describes seven features of the system of worship in the Millennial Kingdom:

1. The law of the **Eastern Gate** (44:1-3).
  - The Eastern gate will be closed at the beginning of the Millennial Reign of Christ, and it will not be reopened for the thousand years.
  - The Shekinah Glory returned to the temple through that gate, and will never again depart from Israel.
  - Ezekiel next describes the prince's ministry at this gate.
2. The **Shekinah Glory** in connection with **Israel's sins**, which resulted in their exile to Babylon (44:4-8).
3. The **Levites**: their punishment, and their duties in the Temple (44:9-14).
4. The **sons of Zadok**: their privileges and responsibilities as those in charge of the sacrifices of the Temple (44:15-31).
5. The **Mountain** of the House of the Lord (45:1-8).
6. The duties of the **prince** (45:9-46:18).
  - The law of the measurements (45:9-12)
  - Carrying out the laws of the offerings (45:13-46:16). This includes the offerings for the Feasts (New Year, Passover, and Tabernacles), the new moons, the Sabbaths, and the daily offerings.
  - The special rights that the prince has.
7. The laws of **the boiling of the sacrifices** (46:19-24).

So Ezekiel says there will be animal sacrifices and other offerings in the Temple during the Millennium.

BY the way, he is not the only prophet to do so.

Here is a list of passages from the Old Testament prophets that teach that there will be animal sacrifices and offerings in the Millennial Kingdom:

Isaiah 56:4-8

Isaiah 60:7

Isaiah 66:18-23

Jeremiah 33:15-18

Ezekiel 40:49-41

Ezekiel 42:13

Ezekiel 43:18-27

Ezekiel 44: 11, 15, 27-30

Ezekiel 45: 13 – 46:15

Ezekiel 46:19-24

Zephaniah 3:8-11

Zechariah 14:16-18

Malachi 3:1-4

**Let's read them together now.**

But this raises several difficulties.

These difficulties cause many pastors and denominations to abandon the literal interpretation of Ezekiel 40-48.

There are three main objections which are raised to refute the teaching that there will be literal animal sacrifices during the Millennial Kingdom:

1. This amounts to a return to the sacrificial system of the Mosaic Law which ended with the death of Christ on the cross.
2. To believe in the reinstatement of the blood sacrifices is heresy.
3. This would violate the teachings of the New Testament, especially in the book of Hebrews.